

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKARTA 03437 150855Z

11

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SAM-01 IO-11 DHA-02 /041 W

----- 011054

R 150800Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3234

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 3437

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ID

SUBJECT: SUHARTO ON RELIGION

1. DURING SPEECH MARCH 12 ON OCCASION OF EVE OF MOHAMMAD'S BIRTHDAY, PRESIDENT SUHARTO SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH ON IMPORTANCE OF CREATING INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL TO INCREASE COMMUNICATION AMONG DIFFERENT RELIGIONS INCLUDING "KEPERCAYAAN" (FAITHS). SUHARTO ALSO CALLED FOR RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND TOLERANCE AND SAID ATTEMPT TO CONVERT A BELIEVER OF PROFESSED RELIGION SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

2. COMMENT: GOI HAS ON SEVERAL EARLIER OCCASIONS FLOATED CONCEPT OF INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL TO INCLUDE "KEPERCAYAAN," WHICH WOULD IN TURN PROVIDE FOR PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES OF JAVANESE MYSTICISM ("KEBATINAN"). THIS CONCEPT IS ANATHEMA TO DEVOUT MOSLEMS WHO CONSIDER "KEBATINAN" NO RELIGION AT ALL, AND FEAR LOSS OF LARGE NUMBERS OF SYNCRETIC JAVANESE MOSLEMS IF "KEBATINAN" IS ACCEPTED AS RELIGION BY GOI. (INTERESTINGLY PRESS ACCOUNTS OF SPEECH DID NOT MENTION SUHARTO'S USE OF "KEPERCAYAAN"). IF GOI PUSHES THROUGH WITH INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL IN WHICH "KEPERCAYAAN" REPRESENTATIVES

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PAGE 02 JAKARTA 03437 150855Z

SIT, THIS ACTION WILL ALIENATE EVEN FURTHER DEVOUT MOSLEM

COMMUNITY. THERE ARE ALSO PERSISTENT RUMORS GOI WILL RAISE
LOW-LEVEL "KEPERCAYAAN" OFFICE IN DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
TO FULL DIRECTORATE, A MOVE EQUALLY OFFENSIVE TO STRICT
MOSLEMS.
NEWSOM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SPEECHES, CHURCH STATE RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976JAKART03437
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760096-0963
From: JAKARTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760361/aaaacboo.tel
Line Count: 66
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SUHARTO ON RELIGION
TAGS: PINT, ID, (SUHARTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006